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Re: Grandview Woodland Community Plan

Summary

The Grandview Woodland Area 30-year Plan is currently under consideration; this letter is in response to the Draft *Goals, Objectives and Emerging Directions* document released June 2013. Broadly speaking, Heritage Vancouver supports the emerging directions as laid out to date, and appreciates the identification of Heritage as a critically important aspect of the character of the Grandview Woodland neighbourhood.

In particular we support the following Emerging Directions:

Housing EP 6.0 - In place density Heritage EP 1.1 - Broad definition of heritage Heritage EP 2.1 - Municipal Heritage Review Heritage EP 2.2 - Identify Heritage Assets, expand Register Heritage EP 2.3 - Prioritize key cultural assets Heritage EP 2.4 - Promotional Material Heritage EP 3.1 - Existing tools Heritage EP 3.2 - RT Review Heritage EP 3.3 - Design Guidelines Commercial Drive CD-3 - Preserve the fine-grained, eclectic urbanity of the Drive.

We note however that certain clauses could have stronger language and more specific direction, particularly around the identification of key heritage assets and their inclusion into a revised Heritage Register, land use in certain sub-areas and innovative ideas around a micro-density bank.

Commercial Drive: Lack of Heritage Recognition

We note with alarm that only 7 sites on Commercial Drive are currently listed on the Heritage Register. There is no other official heritage policy in place that would help protect this unique historic Edwardian-era commercial streetscape, the most intact outside of the downtown core. We strongly urge the immediate consideration of a more formal heritage protection framework for historic Commercial Drive.

Specific Identification of Heritage Assets

In Heritage EP 2.2 as well as within numerous sub-areas, the Plan supports the updating of the Heritage Register by identifying local heritage resources for potential inclusion. We strongly recommend this take place as a formal part of the planning process with the participation of a heritage consultant. The following is a short list of unique non-residential structures that could be included:

- **The Three Halfies** (1768, 1756, 1736 East Hastings St.) (b. unknown), a set of curious quonset-hut style half-moon structures unique to the corridor.
- **The Value Village Building**, (1820 E Hastings St) an interestingly transparent modernist structure
- Star Tile, (2121 E Hastings St) (b. 1964) with its unique ceramic tile facades
- Dayton Boots (2250 East Hastings St) (b. 1946), a historic Vancouver shop and boot maker
- **The Rio Theatre** (1660 East Broadway) (b. 1938), one the few remaining community multi-media theatres in Vancouver.
- **Canada Post Building** (2160 Commercial Dr.) (b. Unknown) a modest but significantly located example of post-war modernism in Vancouver

The needless loss of these important cultural or architectural moments in favour of anonymous three-storey apartments over standard commercial retail units would impoverish the urban fabric of the East Hastings corridor as well as the city as a whole.

Heritage Register and Land Use

Many of these significant unprotected heritage assets are located in areas that could be subject to intense development pressure, particularly along East Hastings between Commercial and Nanaimo, certain areas of Cedar Cove and at the junctions of 1st Ave, Broadway and Commercial. If these areas are upzoned without simultaneously providing legal protection, heritage structures and streetscapes will become tempting targets for redevelopment and most likely, demolition. Once gone, these living cultural artifacts will be gone forever. We recommend the specific identification of heritage assets at this critical moment to retain the unique urban spirit of Grandview Woodland.

However, as noted above we appreciate the Plan's general land use policies in terms of preserving the core of Grandview as detached dwellings, with development focused on the arterial streets, particularly along Nainamo Street and south of Broadway along Commercial.

Grandview Woodland Micro-Density Bank

We recognize that a City is an evolving organism that requires new housing, businesses and development. In numerous cities across North America the Transfer of Development Rights is a common tool to assist in the preservation of significant buildings and neighbourhood character. As such we recommend the inclusion and study of a micro-density transfer bank in the Grandview Woodland Plan.

Similar to the Downtown/Chinatown heritage density bank but limited to the area of the Plan, this micro-bank could allow owners of both important and ordinary properties to realize financial gain allowed by zoning changes, increase the overall density of the neighbourhood while greatly assisting the preservation of the 'Drive'. Given the easy availability of sharing information online, this would seem to be an entirely feasible policy direction. This concept would require additional review; critical to its success would be its inclusion as an emerging direction in the current Plan.

Conclusion

As noted above the Plan is generally heading in a supportable direction and we appreciate the extensive consultation with local and regional heritage groups. However, we hold some reservations particularly around the specific identification and protection of heritage assets, and some land use decisions that have serious implications to the retention of heritage character.

We support the inclusion of innovative ideas to help preserve and protect the character of this significant Vancouver neighbourhood.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to the further development of the Grandview Woodland Neighbourhood Plan.

Sincerely,

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